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THE

CASE OF THE IRISH CHURCH

ARGUED ON ITS

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS GROUNDS:

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE

PROTESTANT ELECTORS OF ENGLAND,

WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE

UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

BY THE

REV. PETER BLACKBURN, M.A.

CURATE OF CASTLE COOMBE, WILTS,

AND AUTHOR OF REASONS FOR THINKING MR. IRVING DECEIVED; OR A DISCUSSION OF SOME QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.—MALACHI ii. 7.

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1835.

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A LETTER,

&c.

FELLOW PROTESTANTS AND FELLOW CHURCHMEN,

THE apology I have to offer you, for presuming to call your attention to what I have here written, is briefly this: I am persuaded by what I have read and heard of men's opinions in the present day, that with many of those, who hold the honourable and important office of representing you in Parliament, there is a great want of just discrimination between truth and error with respect to certain principles, which affect the most important Institution of the State, to the serious peril of our country's honour and welfare. I cannot believe that those individuals would have been elected to this office by their several constituencies respectively, if the same thing did not exist among them also to a very wide extent. On this ground it is, that I have been desirous to lay before you an investigation I have made of certain principles,

which, by their speciousness, would seem to have obtained, unfortunately, a considerable degree of credit in the community; but which I hope to be able to convince some of you at least, who may now be disposed to approve and favour them, are false and evil. And I am further induced to make this attempt, from not having observed that any thing of the kind has been done, when these principles have been adverted to in justification of an important measure, which is now before Parliament, and engrosses the public attention; and because the result, which the influence of these principles is tending to bring about, is in my view of so disastrous a nature, that, feeling my mind roused with the desire to avert it from my country, and believing that the open refutation of these principles is one of the most effectual means to that end, I could not be content that they should remain any longer unrefuted, because it does not seem to have occurred to some other person better qualified for the task than myself, that it was his part to undertake it. That a refutation of these principles should not have been given in the same place where they have been publicly proclaimed, is to be accounted for, I think, by the circumstance of its being requisite to that end that considerations of a purely religious nature should enter into the argument, and these, for obvious reasons, a Senator of the British

House of Commons might think it expedient not to introduce there. This circumstance, however, makes it necessary that a refutation of them should be offered to the public from some other quarter, and it constitutes another part of my apology for inviting your attention to this attempt.

You scarcely need, Brethren, to be more plainly informed, after the observations I have just made, that the subject on which the present investigation is intended to throw light, is the grounds on which every Protestant member of the Legislature, and every Protestant elector of the United Kingdom is called upon to support the establishment of the Protestant United Church of England and Ireland, in Ireland, to the entire and perpetual exclusion of the Roman Catholic Church from such a position. Of the necessity there is that light should be thrown on this subject, I have been oftentimes convinced; and what has occurred during the present Session of Parliament shows me that this should be done at once. For whilst some persons have narrowed these grounds to a dangerous extent, and confessed the inexpediency of the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland, others have gone farther, and have instilled into the minds of Protestants the ill-advised notion that the Legislature might lawfully consent to establish the Roman Catholic Church; others again have gone farther still, and have asserted

that this ought to be the established Church of that country, in justice to the people of it; and some have proceeded so far as to pronounce, in direct terms, that the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland is a grievance and an enormous evil. These sentiments have been promulged by members of the Legislature, who are also professedly members of the Protestant United Church of England and Ireland. They certainly appear to me to be no faithful sons of their Church, but rather traitors to it, whether they intend to be so or not. The principles which have been avowed to warrant the sentiments I have just adverted to, are the principles which I propose to investigate, and hope to be able to refute. And by introducing to more due notice some other principles, which do not appear to me to be so generally or so duly recognised, as they deserve to be, among the grounds on which the Protestant Establishment in Ireland ought to be supported, I hope in both ways to bring some efficient help in preparing the mind of many a hitherto mistaking Protestant elector, to make a decided recognition of her claim to his support, and a distinct avowal of his determination to favour with his suffrage, at all future elections, none but those, who will resist the principle of the measure which has now been proposed by Lord Morpeth, relative to the Protestant United Church of England and Ireland, in Ireland.

When his Lordship introduced this measure to the notice of Parliament, he is reported to have expressed himself decidedly in favour of the principle of an Established Church. And, with respect to the Protestant Church of Ireland, he observed, that its claim to be supported as the Established Church of that country rested on " its long prescription." But besides this he mentioned no other ground of claim; but observed that " if the Protestant Church were not already established in Ireland, no sane person would think of establishing it now." Further than this also, he is reported to have designated the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland as " a pernicious system," and even to have gone the still farther length of speaking of the treatment to which the Protestant Clergy of that country have been subjected of late years from the lawless conduct of the Roman Catholics, as " the just retribution of a pernicious system." An examination and comparison of these several statements will enable us to get at the knowledge of his Lordship's mind with respect to the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland. And I think I can show from them that his Lordship regards the establishment of the Protestant Church in that country not simply as inexpedient, but as an unjust thing, or a grievance; and that he would prefer to see the Roman Catholic Church the established

Church of that country. The principles, which have probably led his Lordship into this state of mind, will be mentioned, when the investigation of them is to take place. At present my business will be to prove that, although his Lordship has not pronounced in direct terms that the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland is a grievance, it is still implied in the above statements that such is his real feeling with respect to it; and also that, under the circumstances of the case, he would think it right that the Roman Catholic Church should be the established Church of Ireland. Perhaps his Lordship, if he were asked the question, would not hesitate to avow that this was a correct representation of his real state of feeling on the subject; but as he has not explicitly stated this on the occasion referred to, I feel that it would not be right for me to impute it to him, unless I can show that it is necessarily implied in the observations he has made. But this I think I can do. And in order to it, I would observe, first of all, that, as it is impossible his Lordship could mean that the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland was "a pernicious system," because of any social evils of which the Protestants were the active authors, and which were the legitimate consequences of any of its doctrines, he must have meant that it was "a pernicious system," because the hostility of the Roman

Catholics was excited by it. Again, neither could his Lordship mean that it was "a pernicious system," because some alleged defects in its constitution had the effect of preventing the diffusion of the good, which it was established to be a means of imparting to the people of Ireland generally, and because the Roman Catholics were angry that those defects should be permitted to remain without a remedy, to their unjust destitution of the benefit which the State intended to place within their reach, and indeed to bring to them, by the establishment of the Protestant Church ;— I say that this, nor nothing like this, could have been his Lordship's meaning, because he observed that "if the Protestant Church were not already established in Ireland, no sane person would think of establishing it now," which implied his belief that the benefit designed to be conveyed by the Protestant Establishment to the people of Ireland generally was rejected by the Roman Catholics. Consequently he could not have believed, that it was any alleged defects in the constitution of this Establishment, which excited the hostility of the Roman Catholics ; but that, independently of any consideration of this kind, the establishment of the Protestant Church, for the purpose of extending the Protestant religion over Ireland, was itself the object of their hostility. It seems incontrovertibly certain, therefore, that his Lordship meant

that the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland was " a pernicious system," because its very existence excited the hostility of the Roman Catholics. Nor can there be the least room for doubt that this is the real truth, (and it would be a crime for any Protestant to attempt to disguise it from himself or others) when it is remembered how it has been openly declared that " the very existence of the Protestant Establishment is its crime ;" and by Mr. O'Connell lately, that the grievance was, not that the tithes were paid *to* the Protestant Clergy, but *for* them. But if his Lordship is thus proved to hold that the existence of the Protestant Establishment in Ireland is that which makes it " a pernicious system," because it is the existence of it which, under any constitution adapted to the furtherance of its professed object, must excite the hostility of the Roman Catholics ; and if his Lordship proceeds farther to speak of this hostility as " the just retribution of a pernicious system," it would seem to follow as a just conclusion, that the existence of the Protestant Establishment in Ireland is, in his Lordship's judgment, an unjust thing, or a grievance. And further than this, as his Lordship has declared his conviction that the principle of an Established Church is a right one, it is a necessary conclusion also from the foregoing, that his Lordship, under the circumstances of the case,

would think it right that the Roman Catholic Church should be the Established Church of Ireland. Thus then is Lord Morpeth's real state of feeling with respect to the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland ascertained to be according to these conclusions. But I cannot proceed to my further object of tracing the principles which have probably led his Lordship into this state of mind, and investigating the nature of them, without first making a few observations on the sentiment expressed by his Lordship, that the treatment, to which the Protestant Clergy have been subjected of late years from the hostility of the Roman Catholics to the existence of the Protestant Establishment, is but "the just retribution of a pernicious system."

This sentiment, delivered by his Lordship, not with any careful restriction of it to himself as his own humble opinion merely, but with a seeming disposition to assume that it was one to which every body must needs assent, appears to me to deserve the strongest reprobation. Truly indeed have we good reason to lament the want of wise men in the high places of authority, when a Minister of State can commit the fearful error of making null and void the first principle on which the security of obedience to civil government depends, viz.—that it is the duty of subjects to be obedient to all laws until they are repealed by

the authority which enacted them. Of this great error Lord Morpeth is found to have been guilty in this instance by exculpating the lawless and accusing the law. In doing so, however, his Lordship is only one of many who are in the habit of acting in the same indiscreet way, as often as they take notice of disobedience to any particular law, which they have determined with themselves is a bad one. Because they have come to this conclusion, they therefore seem to think that every one else *ought* to do the same; and by refusing to speak of the persons, who illegally oppose themselves to this law, as guilty of any moral transgression, they make their private disapprobation of it morally tantamount to its abrogation by the authority of the Legislature. A little reflection only is necessary to perceive the pernicious consequences that are likely to arise from men in authority speaking in this way—consequences which these same persons would be prompt enough to discern, if others should act in the same manner with reference to any law which they chanced to approve. It is indeed most grievous to see men showing such a dangerous partiality to themselves, and as it were claiming for themselves, when it pleases them, a dispensation from principles of conduct which they rightly expect shall bind others. I will just put a case, which may perhaps assist some of these persons, who may perchance

read this letter, to judge aright of their conduct in this respect. Suppose it should happen, that some serious resistance of a more general character than any that has yet been shown, should be offered by the labouring classes to the enforcement of the Poor Law Amendment Act, what would some of these persons say, what would Lord Morpeth say, if any member of Parliament, because he disapproved of this Act, should attempt to excuse any outrages committed by the labourers, on the ground that the law being a bad one, their conduct was to be viewed as "the just retribution of a pernicious system?" His Lordship would most likely hear such an observation with the greatest uneasiness, and being prompt in this instance to discover the violation of right principle made in the announcement of such a sentiment, would be likely perhaps to declaim indignantly against it as instigatory to lawlessness and outrage. What then ought he to think of any other member of Parliament who, on the ground of his private opinion that the law is bad, which has constituted the Protestant Church the Established Church of Ireland, should have presumed to declare, that the lawless conduct of the Irish Roman Catholics towards their Protestant brethren was but "the just retribution of a pernicious system?" Such conduct he would surely be obliged to condemn as most unstatesmanlike, nay more, as morally as

well as politically wrong. For, let a man's private opinion of any law be never so bad, he makes himself the abettor of social disorder, and is found a despiser of the doctrine of Christ's religion, which inculcates submission to every ordinance of the ruling power, if not being content with expressing his disapprobation of the law, as strongly as he sees fit, and using legitimate means to procure its abrogation, he should venture to declare, that they are not to be regarded as criminal who trample upon it, and to exculpate them by attributing the blame of their lawlessness to the law itself. I do not want to carry the doctrine of non-resistance and passive obedience any farther than St. Paul intended when he taught the Christians "to submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." I do not therefore say that this is a rule without exceptions. It is not indeed within my present purpose to define what might be considered lawful exceptions to it; but you will fully agree with me, I think, in pronouncing the conduct of the Roman Catholics of Ireland towards the Protestants, because of their dislike to the Protestant Establishment, to be a most flagrant and wicked violation of it, instead of "the just retribution of a pernicious system." I now then return to the prosecution of my subject.

It has been shown, from an examination of Lord Morpeth's observations on the occasion of

his bringing forward the present measure for the future regulation of the Established Church in Ireland, that his feeling with respect to this establishment is, that it is an unjust institution of the state in regard of the Roman Catholics; that its existence is " a pernicious system ;" and that the Roman Catholic Church ought in right to be the Established Church of that country. In this feeling there is reason to believe that a considerable number of Protestant members of Parliament participate with him. And it would be a strange inconsistency in them, if they should yet acknowledge that the Protestant Establishment had any claim to be supported; and, instead of advocating its abolition, should vote for any measure that was brought forward with the professed intention, and which they also professed to believe had a real tendency, to render this Establishment more efficient for its purpose, and to establish it on a firmer basis. Yet this is the inconsistency into which Lord Morpeth and the present government have fallen, presuming that there is a community of sentiment between them. For his Lordship acknowledges that the Protestant Church has a claim to be supported as the Established Church of Ireland, on " its long prescription," at the same time that he confesses there is some antagonist claim on the part of the Roman Catholic Church to be the Established Church of that

country, which he considers to be of such a superior and preponderating nature, as to justify him in denominating the existence of the Protestant Establishment "a pernicious system," and the hostility manifested to it by the Roman Catholics as "the just retribution of a pernicious system." The admission of counter claims is exceedingly inconvenient in a matter of this sort, and it would appear to be the proper course in this as well as in every other case of doubtful right, that the weaker claim should cede to the stronger, and the party making it be no longer allowed to have any right at all. At any rate it does not appear possible to act in the case except on such a principle, unless the matter in dispute could be apportioned to the contending parties according to the strength of their respective claims, the possibility of which in the present case the proper notion of an Established Church entirely excludes, as it will be seen when I afterwards speak on that point. When, therefore, Lord Morpeth has made it so clearly appear, that he considers the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to be so vastly superior to that of the Protestant, one is bound to believe that, if he brought forward any measure relative to the existing Establishment, it could not be with any intention to strengthen it in its position. To believe otherwise would be to accuse him of wilful injustice towards the Roman Catho-

lics, and also of falsifying his own statements. But if his Lordship should aver that such was his intention; what is to be done then? I answer that his Lordship has then placed himself in the situation of a person, whose statements are found to be inconsistent with each other, and that he has no right to complain if other persons shall decide from the circumstances of the case against the sincerity of either statement. Both cannot be believed; and therefore if one is, the other cannot be. And I for one cannot see how Lord Morpeth can sincerely intend to strengthen the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland, and sincerely say that it is "a pernicious system," of which the lawless hostility of the Roman Catholics is "the just retribution." If I believe him sincere in this statement, I am obliged to believe him insincere in the other, and vice versâ. I am at liberty then to decide for myself from the circumstances of the case, in which statement I believe him to be sincere. Now, in looking at these circumstances, I see that the Roman Catholics, who have been labouring for the downfall of the Protestant Establishment, receive the measure with satisfaction, whilst those who are known to approve of the Protestant Establishment, and to feel the most lively interest in its safety and prosperity, and who on other accounts, as well as on this, are entitled to be thought good judges of the

real tendency of any measure affecting it, most strongly deprecate it. These are sufficient to convince me, independently of any consideration I may have given the subject myself, that the real tendency of the measure is to subvert this Establishment. But when, in addition to these, I also perceive, that Roman Catholics have the hardihood to pretend that they view this measure with satisfaction, because of its favourable tendency with respect to the stability of the Protestant Establishment, and when I reflect that it is in the face of these circumstances that Lord Morpeth and the Government profess that such also is the view they have of its tendency in proposing it, whilst they also disapprove of the Protestant Establishment in Ireland, I seem to myself to have the clearest and best grounds for choosing to believe his Lordship sincere in denominating the existence of this Establishment "a pernicious system" and regarding it as a grievance, rather than in the contradictory avowal he has made of its being his object to strengthen and perpetuate it. And I can only look upon the act of his thus dealing with the Protestant Establishment with such a profession towards her, and with such supporters at his back, as betraying her into the hands of her enemies with a kiss.

It is not any part of my province to search into this extraordinary proceeding, with a view to dis-

cover what will account for this unfortunate insincerity, which would seem to exist on the part of his Lordship and the government, in the conduct they are now pursuing with reference to the establishment of the United Church of England and Ireland, in Ireland, any further than to ascertain the principles, which would seem to have guided them into that state of mind and judgment respecting it, which has been developed above, and which has made it so easy for them to fall into the present course. Now no one can be much at a loss to discover what the chief of these principles is, who remembers how much has been said of the great disparity of numbers between the Roman Catholics and Protestants of Ireland. I believe then I shall not err in saying, that the chief principle, which has operated on the mind of Lord Morpeth, to make him think the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland an unjust thing, and by consequence " a pernicious system," is this, that because the religion of the great majority of the people of Ireland is the Roman Catholic, it is just and right that the Established Church of that country should also be the Roman Catholic.

I have not seen any statement made by his Lordship, which enables me to determine whether or no he thinks, that the Roman Catholic Church has also a claim to be the Established Church of Ireland, on the ground of her having been so for-

merly; except that it would seem to be a necessary consequence from the foregoing position, that if his Lordship holds that, he must hold this also. For if majority of numbers is a valid ground now-a-days, on which the Legislature ought to think it right to establish the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, notwithstanding the nature of that religion and the experience which this nation, in common with the greater part of Christendom, has had of the legitimate practical consequences of its doctrines even to the present day, it must have been so when the State first established the Protestant Church; and his Lordship must hold that the forfeiture of this distinction, and of the Ecclesiastical property connected with it, by the Clergy of the Roman Catholic Church, was an unjust thing, and consequently, that prior possession, as well as majority of numbers, affords a just ground, on which the Legislature should recognise the right of the Roman Catholic Church to be constituted the Established Church of Ireland. Such a sentiment has been muttered by some persons, and is in perfect consistency with others which they hold. I shall think it sufficient, however, with respect to this principle of right by prior possession, to observe that, if the State has in former times justly held that the Roman Catholic Church, for good and sufficient causes did rightly forfeit her claim to be maintained as the Established Church

of this country, and that she did also rightly forfeit the property which she then held, and that all right to these things did as entirely and completely determine in her case, as it does in the case of any individual who for treason has forfeited his estates and dignities to the Crown ; then may Protestants of the present day as justly do the same, and justly deny that prior possession gives any ground of claim at all to the Roman Catholic Church. And I would further observe that the claim, which the Protestant Church now has to be maintained as the Established Church of this kingdom, and in the possession of the property which the State has assigned to her, ought in all justice to her to be exclusively recognised, so long as she cannot be accused of being the active cause of evils to the State, and the State remains of opinion that the religion she inculcates is according to truth. Roman Catholics may not be at all disposed to acquiesce in this view of the case, but rather to deny the justice of the forfeiture, and to regard the Protestant Church as an usurper of the rights of their Church, and the Protestant State (I call it Protestant both here and elsewhere, because the great majority of the Legislature, and especially because the highest estate of the realm, is Protestant,) as its oppressor. There is, however, no remedy for that except what it rests with the Roman Catholics alone to apply to themselves;

and if it should be found that, instead of submitting to the event which Providence has brought to pass, viz.—the transfer of power from their hands into the hands of Protestants, they think fit to use every art, and to make every endeavour to regain from them what they have lost, they have no right to complain, if the Protestant State should adopt what she considers to be the necessary measures for securing the stability of her own power, and the safety of the institutions which she has established, from their attempts to weaken and subvert them.

I cannot pass from this part of my subject without first noticing briefly what Lord Morpeth has observed with respect to the claim, which he would allow the Protestant Church to have, to be the Established Church of Ireland. His Lordship has allowed that she has a claim, on the ground of "long prescription;" but as he has forborne to mention any other, I conceive I am at liberty to say that this is the only one, which he thinks can be allowed her. I do not mean that his Lordship does not see any other reason than this why,—as a private person, he should not wish the Protestant Church to be the Established Church of Ireland rather than the Roman Catholic; but only why,—as a Statesman, considering the respective claims of the two Churches apart from his private feeling with respect to each, he should allow the

right of the Protestant Church to be maintained as the Established Church of that country. In other words, that his Lordship does not recognise among the grounds, on which he as a Statesman is called upon to consider this question, that feeling of conscience, which requires him, as an individual, to join himself to the Protestant Church, and to desire her advancement and increase to the decay of the Roman Catholic. I suppose also from his using this expression "long prescription" as descriptive of the claim of the Protestant Church, that his Lordship considers that the State ought to be regarded as the tenant in fee of the Ecclesiastical property, and the Church she establishes as the tenant for life, that life being determinable by the will of the State; (and this, as it appears to me, is the right view to take of the subject;) and further, that with respect to the Protestant Church, which is the present tenant for life, his Lordship considers that the only ground on which she can prefer a claim, that the State should not consider her life to have determined, and should not make the Roman Catholic Church tenant in her place, is the simple fact that she is the Church, whose Ministers have been in the possession of this property for many generations past. This it must be confessed is next to acknowledging that she has no claim at all, when the counter claim of the Roman Catholic Church, on the ground of her

numbers, as it would seem, has been admitted by his Lordship to be of such overwhelming magnitude, that he does not hesitate to call the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland "a pernicious system," and the hostility of the Roman Catholics to it, evinced in such ways as robbery and bloodshed, "the just retribution of a pernicious system." It cannot be doubtful then that when circumstances shall appear to be sufficiently favourable for making the change, his Lordship continuing in his present state of mind would be found readily consenting to declare the Protestant Established Church of Ireland defunct, and the Roman Catholic Church the resuscitated tenant of the estate. But I would wish to save every one of you, my Brethren, and every Protestant besides, from the guilt and shame of being an accessary to any such proceeding, and therefore shall proceed to show, that the Protestant Established Church of Ireland has other and infinitely higher claims than her "long prescription" to be maintained in the position, in which the State, under Divine Providence, has placed her, and in short why her life can never be lawfully considered by a Protestant State to have determined, so long as the life of the Protestant State itself exists.

There is reason to apprehend that the principle adverted to above, as the probable cause of Lord Morpeth's present state of mind towards the

Protestant Establishment in Ireland, may have taken with many of you, and have had the effect of creating in your minds also considerable apathy as to its preservation, if not a mistaken desire for its abolition. Most earnestly then do I desire to expose to you the speciousness of this principle, and to show you that *majority of numbers* does not constitute any valid plea, why the Protestant State of this country should acknowledge the alleged right of the Roman Catholic Church to be made the Established Church of Ireland. But in order to this, I must introduce to your careful notice an element of the question, which to me appears to be of primary importance, but which has hitherto, I think, been but obscurely suggested by those who have spoken on the subject in Parliament,—I mean, that the State is forbidden by its duty to God to consent to establish the Roman Catholic Church. For it is evidently taken for granted in this argument *ex majori numero*, (and herein lies the fallacy of it,) that the Protestant part of the State might as lawfully, in the sight of God, consent to the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion as of the Protestant. But if this be not a true position, (and I shall presently argue that it is not,) then the plea in favour of the Church Establishment in Ireland being Roman Catholic, as addressed to the Protestant part of the State,

is not a valid one; although many Protestant members of Parliament have hitherto admitted it, and may still continue to do so, for want, as I consider, of the ability to discern rightly between moral good and evil. I say, that if this be not a true position, the plea that is founded on the great majority of the number of Roman Catholics in Ireland above the Protestants is not a valid one. For subjects can have no right to expect of any part of the legislative body that, to satisfy or please them, they should consent to enact a law which they believe would involve them in the guilt of offending God by sanctioning what He holds in abomination. God is to be feared and reverenced above all. In such a case, therefore, if they should venture to please men, they could not be the servants of God. For He has given them no dispensation to postpone His most holy will to the pleasure of others, when they act in the public capacity to which His providence has raised them, any more than He has in respect of their conduct in private life. His will binds them equally in both. Whatever, therefore, their conscience, instructed by His Word, informs them must be held in abomination in His sight, that they are bound by all the sanctions of religion never to consent to countenance by law. And what they learn from hence to hold in abomination themselves, they must of necessity believe God does likewise;

and on that belief they must act, whether their judgment in the matter be, in point of fact, well or ill founded. It matters not that the parties, who solicit them, entertain a different opinion of that which it is intended the law should sanction. For this circumstance does not alter the character of the thing itself in the sight of God; and does not acquit those of sin who conscientiously approve it as good, if in fact it be evil in His sight. Much less does it acquit those of guilt, who believing it to be evil, do nevertheless consent to sanction it, in order to get rid of the solicitations or hostility of those, who think it to be good. But these are points that are not generally seen and received for truth. Indeed the very contrary are asserted to be true. And so it comes to pass, that one false principle is fortified and upheld by others of the same kind. I must then, first of all, expose the error of these, in order to show that, whoever believes the Roman Catholic religion to be evil, they cannot make the act of establishing it not to be evil in him.

The first of these erroneous principles is, that a man is not to be accounted an offender against God in any act, which proceeds from his conscientious belief; because, if he err, God is to be supposed to allow his conscientious belief as a full excuse of his error. Now, instead of enter-

ing into much argument to prove the erroneousness of this principle, I will adduce at once the decisive authority of an inspired Apostle, whose spiritual understanding is, therefore, not to be questioned. St. Paul said that once "he verily thought with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," yet after his conversion he instances the *single* fact of his opposition to Christ, and His Gospel, as the proof of his being the chief of sinners. This he does in the first chapter of his first Epistle to Timothy. It is true that he was "a persecutor, and a blasphemer, and injurious," through an honest unbelief arising from ignorance. But that neither made his unbelief sinless, nor his evil deeds good, in the sight of God. He was the chief of sinners notwithstanding. He does not advert to the honesty of his unbelief, as clearing him from sin, but as the reason why he was not precluded from the mercy of God in showing him his error, and bringing him out of the mad course of self-destruction, on which he had entered. "But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Neither does he intimate that, if he had persisted in the same course for want of such a remarkable interposition of Christ to show him his error, he should eventually have found mercy at His judgment-seat. For if he had not been, through the mercy

of God, converted before his death, he shows us plainly, by what he says of his Jewish brethren in the tenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, who still remained in their ignorance and unbelief, in what a situation he believed he should have been,—even in a state of damnation, for this he intimates was their state so long as they disbelieved the Gospel, though in other respects having a zeal towards God. And the reason of this is, that neither his former ignorance nor theirs was unavoidable and necessary. Means of information and grounds of belief sufficient both for them and him, without a revelation of Christ himself from heaven, had been set before them, and therefore the continuance of his unbelief (had such been the case) would have argued not a defect of understanding, but a perverse disposition of the will. Nor is it to be doubted that numbers, whose unbelief or misbelief has continued long from this cause, especially if the light of truth has been openly set before them, grow more hardened in it by the just judgment of God upon their souls. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God for this cause shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." And yet the more hardened men become in their souls from this judgment of

considerable mischief in my house, in orde prevail on me to do so,) merely because *he c* stantly averred that he knew better than I wha was he wanted to have, and was sure it was poison but wholesome drink? I suppose that *o* one answer could be returned to this; and th every one would say, that I should only be doi my duty to him to withhold his desire; and, *i* case he continued this conduct, should do justly t tell my servants to fix a strait waistcoat upon him until he showed a disposition to bear my *refusa* without disturbing the peace of my house. Now I, as a Protestant, profess my belief that our Roman Catholic Brethren in Ireland are all drunk *with* the spirit of error in religion; and, as we have good reason to know, they have been and are still endeavouring, by the lawlessness of *their* proceedings, to prevail on the Protestant State of this kingdom to take away the sincere milk of God's Word, (which she believes she has provided for them by establishing the Protestant Church and religion among them, and by means of *which* she earnestly desires to make them spiritually sober,) and instead thereof, to give them the deadly wine of the Church of Rome's fornication, as she esteems the doctrine of that Church to be, by establishing it in the place of the Protestant. For it would be simple in the extreme for any *one* to pretend to believe that the Roman Catholics

did not aim to get their religion established by the State, as well as the Protestant Establishment abolished. The spirit of the Church of Rome is too well known, and too plainly manifest in the present times, to make it credible that she does not thirst after that distinction and pre-eminence from the State, and even to erect herself in dominion over it. The points of resemblance, then, between the two cases appear to me to be exact, so far as the illustrative case goes; and I deduce from it for myself, and think that every Protestant ought to deduce the same for himself, that the circumstance of the Roman Catholics believing their religion to be pure, and therefore fitted to do them spiritual good, could not make it lawful for me, if I were a member of Parliament, to consent to make it the established religion of the State, believing as I do that its doctrine is in many respects exceedingly corrupt, and therefore destructive in its effects upon their souls. The case in illustration, however, is, as I observed before, deficient in meeting the whole of the case of the State's establishing the Roman Catholic religion; for it does not take in the dishonour, which I believe would thereby be done to God, but only the injury which would be done to men. If, therefore, the consideration that the State would hereby become a party to the destruction of men's souls is a strong argument why every Protestant mem-

ber of Parliament should not consent to establish the Roman Catholic religion, it becomes infinitely strengthened by the additional consideration that she would also hereby become a party to the dishonouring of God. How void of judgment then does this principle also appear, when seen by this illustration! Do not then suffer yourselves, brethren, to be beguiled into the notion that, because the Roman Catholics believe their religion to be pure and saving in its tendency, you might lawfully consent to its being made the established religion of Ireland, though you believe it to be exceedingly corrupt and pernicious.

Having exposed the error of these two principles, I feel warranted to make this first conclusion, that the Protestant members of the Legislature would not be justified in establishing the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland, if they believed that religion to be corrupt and pernicious, notwithstanding that Roman Catholics think it to be true and saving in its tendency; because it is repugnant with the immutable will of God that any should make themselves parties to offering him dishonour, and leading their fellow men in the path of destruction; and both these things the Protestant members of Parliament would do, if they should consent to establish the Roman Catholic religion, believing it to be corrupt and pernicious.

It is possible, however, that some might demur

to the last position, which is taken in this conclusion, as an assumption, and contend that the act of establishing the Roman Catholic religion would not involve the Protestant members of Parliament in the consequences just mentioned, even supposing them to be the legitimate results of that religion. To this I reply that, if the person making this demurrer would mean, (as it is probable he would,) that the act of the State in furnishing a maintenance to the Clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland would not involve her in these consequences, I should be disposed to agree with him, but should deny the inference: because I do not take the expression "to establish a religion," to signify simply the act of furnishing a maintenance for the ministers of any particular religion; but rather the act of the State when she selects a religion, with which to connect all her public proceedings that ought fitly to be attended with religious actions, and the doctrines of which she desires and intends should be propagated among the people committed to her charge. Now I cannot suppose that any one could be found, who would deny that every individual member of the Legislature, who should consent to the establishment, in this sense, of any particular religion, would incur the responsibility of all its legitimate effects. And I therefore feel at liberty to affirm my first conclusion. The question then is, ought

the Roman Catholic religion to be accounted by the Protestant members of the Legislature to be so corrupt and pernicious, as that it may be affirmed of it with truth, that the dishonour of God and the destruction of men's souls, to say nothing of any evil effects produced by it on the well being of civil society, are its legitimate effects? *The* proper answer to this question will determine whether or no it may be lawfully established. And if the last conclusion be in the negative, *then* the argument *ex majori numero* is, I apprehend, completely proved to be a sophism.

Before, however, I proceed to answer this *question*, I will just offer a few remarks, which may perhaps be expected from me, in confirmation of the principle I have just admitted, that the State may furnish a maintenance to the ministers of a religion which she believes to be false, without incurring the responsibility of all its legitimate effects. I am conscious that many, who would agree with me perhaps in every other point I have advanced, would think they had just reason to differ from me here, and even to allege that I am inconsistent with myself in holding, that it is not lawful for the State to establish a religion which she believes to be false, and yet that it can be lawful for her to grant a maintenance to the ministers of the same. To such I would beg to suggest, that the simple act of giving a mainte-

nance to the ministers of any particular religion is not establishing it; and that, if it be denied that any considerations of expediency could justify the act of granting a maintenance to the ministers of a religion which the State believed to be false, it would be difficult to prove that the State is not wrong in tolerating them at all. The argument which would prove the former position, would disprove the latter, according to my apprehension. But if the State is not wrong in tolerating such persons, neither would she be, if she were to consent to grant them a maintenance on the principle of expediency. If an act of this kind were done without any intention of rendering the propagation of their religion more effectual, or its continuance more lasting, and simply with a view to secure some necessary end, which the State has just reason to think she shall be able to secure by this means, but which she finds herself at a loss to secure by the ordinary methods of government, it does appear to me, that she would be as entirely clear, in this case, of any participation in the effects of the religion taught by these persons, as she is in the case of granting them toleration. Let us suppose, for instance, that the persons and property of the members of the established religion in any State were kept in continual jeopardy by the threatenings and outrages of the members of another religion, which the State had refused to establish be-

cause she believed it to be corrupt and pernicious; that the object of these malcontents was simply to gain for the use of their ministers the ecclesiastical property of the country, which was now in the hands of the ministers of the established religion, claiming the same as due to them of right because theirs was the religion of the great majority of the people; and suppose further, that the State had just reason to believe, that after she had transferred this property according to their desire, they would be content, and would suffer the ministers of the established religion to prosecute their duties without the fear of molestation and injury, and the members of the established religion in general to live in the peaceful enjoyment of their lives and property. I do think in such a case the State might lawfully transfer the property in question, and leave it with the members of the established religion to support their own ministers by voluntary contributions to a general fund raised for that purpose. She might indeed pursue a different course with perfect justice. But if this would ensure peace, it would be more befitting the character of a Christian government to avoid the necessity of perhaps a sanguinary contest with a portion of her subjects, by recommending the ministers of the established religion to give up their right to this property, and to look for a maintenance from the voluntary contributions of the

members of their Church, till it should please God so to prosper their labours, as to convert the majority of the people to their religion, when their adversaries, on their own principle, would no longer be entitled to the use of the property they now claimed. But the case would be most materially altered, if the State had just reason to think, that the object of these malcontents was not simply to get their own ministers invested with the ecclesiastical property of the country, but to resist and put down the attempt that was being made to propagate the religion which she had chosen to establish as the religion of the State, and to claim that theirs should be the established religion instead. These are concessions which no member of the State, believing their religion to be corrupt and pernicious, could lawfully consent to make. Inestimable as unity, peace, and concord are, and imperative as the duty of a State is to consult and maintain the relations of peace between herself and her subjects, these temporal benefits are procured at an unlawful sacrifice, and therefore at too dear a rate for her, if they be purchased by her apostacy from the cause of truth and of God. These malcontents, therefore, by entertaining such objects, would put it out of the power of the State to provide for the maintenance of peace, by yielding her own right to dispose of the ecclesiastical property of the country as she would like best, and

satisfying their desire instead. For she would see, that this concession would only encourage them to pursue their other objects with fresh zeal and by similar means, and only shift the necessity of resistance one stage farther back, where perhaps it could be made with less advantage to herself. For it is at this point, I insist, that the nature of any concession she might make for peace-sake would pass from lawful to unlawful. There is precisely the same difference, between the State's transferring any property, that is at her disposal, into the hands of the ministers of such a corrupt religion as could justify its members in acting after this manner, and her consenting to establish it, as there is between a man's giving his money to a banditti to save his son's life from being taken, and his consenting, as the next condition they are pleased to impose, to come and turn robber himself. The State, therefore, might lawfully, as it appears to me, transfer any property that is at her disposal to any politico-religious banditti among her subjects, if that will suffice to content them, and to save their fellow-subjects from their violence and injuries; but it is impossible she could lawfully, in the sight of God, consent to their demand, if nothing else would satisfy them but that she must do, what in her belief would be, to rob God of his honour, men of their salvation, and the country of her civil

and religious liberty. For this, in her belief, must be the effect of her consenting to suppress the propagation of what she believes to be true religion, and to establish another, which she believes to be corrupt and pernicious. Now, if the Roman Catholic religion be of such a nature that it would be unlawful for the Protestant State of this kingdom to establish it in any part of its dominions, which is the point we are now coming to inquire into; and if it be clear to the State, as I apprehend it is, that the Roman Catholics of Ireland are not only aiming to obtain the Ecclesiastical property of that country for the uses of their religion, but likewise to suppress the propagation of the Protestant, and to get their religion recognised instead of it as the established religion in Ireland; and if it be further clear to the State, that in order to attain these objects, there is every reason to expect the same system of injurious treatment of the Protestants would be pursued, even if she consented to transfer the Ecclesiastical property of Ireland to the use of the ministers of their Church, or to any other use more acceptable to them than that of rendering the Protestant establishment more efficient for its purpose; then ought the Roman Catholics to be considered to have put it out of the power of this Protestant State to give them contentment, except by making concessions which it is not lawful for her to make,

according to the will of Almighty God; and therefore, as there could be no expediency, in this case, in diverting this property from its present use, which she thinks is the best, and desires should continue, the State would appear to act wisely in making her stand at once, and providing, as best she may, against the consequences of her refusal to appropriate this property to any other purpose, than that of maintaining the efficiency of the Protestant Establishment.

The foregoing observations will afford the right answer to those persons, who are in the habit of traducing the Protestant Church by saying, that rather than part with her property she would not care to see Ireland deluged with blood. If this property were the only thing at stake, and if the abdication of it would ensure peace and safety to Protestants, I feel confident that the Clergy of the Protestant Church of Ireland, rather than witness such an issue, would willingly give up their right, and that the Laity of the Protestant Church in that country would willingly undertake to give them a competent maintenance in the discharge of their duties. But the case is far different, as these persons might well know, and from no consideration perhaps with greater certainty than from this very one, that it has not entered in the minds of the Protestant Clergy and Laity of that country to come forward with such a proposition.

They live under the constant feeling that it is not the pastures of the Protestant Church which provoke the malignant envy of the Roman Catholics, but the camp of Protestantism itself; that the proud spirit of Romanism is grieved to see the Protestant religion recognised as the established religion of the State in a country where she yet holds under her dominion the souls of the great majority of the people; and that she views with feelings of the most determined hostility the attempts which the Protestant Church is making to expose the errors of her doctrine, and the consequences of those errors, in order to deliver the people out of her hands. They feel, therefore, that the resistance which has been made by the Roman Catholics to the payment of tithes, has for its object to starve them out of the country, in the hope of putting down Protestantism, and that, however maintained, they would still be the objects of their persecution. Is there any cause, then, to wonder that they should never have proposed to abdicate this property, or any to reproach them for not having done so? The circumstances of the case would naturally preclude the occurrence of such an idea to any but those, who think that all religions are alike, that one is as capable of rendering glory to God, and saving men's souls, and promoting the social and civil interests of men as another, and that the object of the State in estab-

lishing a religion is simply to have a body of men, who, by means of truth or falsehood, shall manage to keep the people in quietness and order! The Irish Protestant Clergy have done themselves immortal honour by the courage which they have evinced, in remaining at their posts amidst such threatening dangers; and by the patience with which they have borne the privations so cruelly brought upon them; thus showing that the work of the Lord, to which they had consecrated themselves, is that for which they are prepared to die, and that there is no sacrifice, which they are not prepared to make, except that of their duty to God and their brethren.

In resuming the argument from which I have digressed a short space, it may not be inexpedient just to remind you, brethren, at what stage of it we are arrived. I have exposed to you the error of two false principles, which are commonly made use of to justify the admission of the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to be the established Church of Ireland, on the ground of the greater number of its adherents,—principles which teach, that it is not necessary for Protestant members of the Legislature, in dealing with this question, to have regard to what their own belief either is, or ought to be, respecting the nature of that religion. I have endeavoured to show, in opposition to these principles, that persons who conscientiously follow a false religion, are not, on that

account, to be deemed guiltless before God; and then, that neither ought those persons to be, who, believing a religion to be false, should consent to sanction it for the use of others, on the ground that they believe it to be true. And thus have I established the conclusion that, if the Roman Catholic religion be believed to be corrupt and pernicious, injurious to God's honour, and hurtful to men's souls, a Protestant member of the Legislature, having that belief of it, would be guilty of a great offence before God, if he should consent to establish it on any account whatever: for no considerations of expediency could have any allowable place here. What now then remains to be done is to consider, whether the nature of the Roman Catholic religion be such as to make it the imperative duty of Protestants to deem it an unlawful act for them to sanction it. And if the affirmative of this be the right conclusion, then ought every Protestant to consider, that the plea in favour of the alleged right of the Roman Catholic Church to be the established Church of Ireland, on the ground of the great majority of Roman Catholics in that country above Protestants, is entirely out of place, being void of reason and justice as addressed to him; and that he is bound by all the sanctions of religion to give his voice, whether by himself or his representative in Parliament, against any proposal, which

there is reason to think has even a remote tendency to bring about the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in that country.

It is not to be expected that, in a letter of this kind, I should enter, at any great length, into an explanation of the nature and tendency of any Roman Catholic doctrines or practices. All that it seems necessary for me to do, is to give a general statement of the grounds on which my own mind is satisfied, and on which I think the mind of every man ought to be so too, that the religion of the Church of Rome is so corrupt and anti-Christian, both in doctrine and practice, as to make it absolutely sinful for any one to sanction it, and even to be indifferent about the diminution or increase of its influence. I would observe, however, that it behoves every Protestant, who has not inquired into this subject, not to think that, if he forbears to inquire, and keeps his mind in ignorance of the causes for which Protestants in general have denounced the religion of the Church of Rome as corrupt and anti-Christian, he will then be innocent in acting on the presumption, that there are no causes wherefore he should consider himself bound in duty to God not to consent to sanction and assist it. The want of inquiry in such a case would convict him of insincerity, of a desire not to see that this was his duty, and would leave him under much the

same condemnation as though he were convinced of its contrariety to true religion, and then acted with respect to it, in defiance of those convictions. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness more than light, because their deeds were evil." It is to be feared that there are Protestants who are yielding to the temptation, arising from different causes, to practise this delusion upon themselves. I hope my having mentioned it may serve to open the eyes of any, who may be in such a predicament, to see their error and their danger, and lead them to consider the subject with singleness of heart. There are abundant means of information to be found in the writings of the British Reformers, and other eminent divines, who have bestowed their labour in exposing the wicked errors of this Church. The following is a general statement of some of the grounds, on which my own mind is satisfied that it is right to denounce the Church of Rome as corrupt and anti-Christian, and to oppose, to the utmost, every effort she may make to get herself acknowledged by this Protestant State, and made the established Church of Ireland. And after having made this statement, I shall consider myself at liberty to say that, in my opinion, every Protestant ought to be of the same judgment, and to determine with himself to act in the same way.

If the points of difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions consisted only in such things as distinguish the Protestant Episcopal Church from the Presbyterian, both in Scotland and Ireland, I would then admit that a Protestant member of the Legislature might as lawfully sanction the establishment of the one as of the other. And if any circumstances should arise to make it a question, whether the establishment of the one should cease, and give place to that of the other, which had a great majority of members, I would also admit that the claim from hence might reasonably be allowed to have great weight against the claim from previous institution, or, as Lord Morpeth would be inclined to say, from prescription. On this supposition, either denomination might justly be deemed capable of answering the ends which a State ought to contemplate when she establishes a religion, viz. to advance the glory of God, by procuring the instruction of the people in the right doctrine of His word, and bringing them to worship Him with a pure form of worship. And if this be done in very deed, and the people incline to embrace it, then the political benefits, which the state also desires to reap, may be expected to follow,—civilization, order, industry, progressive improvement in science and the arts, general prosperity, contentment, and peace. A Protestant member

of the Legislature, therefore, would not be guilty of compromising his duty to God, if, the case being as I have supposed, he should give his consent to the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion. But every well instructed Protestant knows perfectly, that the points of difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions are not of this kind. They involve something of a more serious nature, something more essential in religion, than differences about the government of a Church by Bishops or a Presbytery, the use of precomposed or extemporaneous prayers, the propriety of receiving the Lord's Supper kneeling or sitting, and other points of the like sort. The Church of Rome, as every one knows, has decreed the most wicked and damnable positions; but it is not so generally considered as it ought to be, that she has affixed to these the seal of immutable truth by maintaining the doctrine of her own Infallibility, so that it is impossible they can ever become obsolete as principles of conduct, any longer than it serves the purpose of her followers to say so, and they find they have not the power to put them in practice with impunity. And that this is true, the experience we have had of the conduct of the Roman Catholics in this kingdom of late years, I think, abundantly proves. She maintains the supremacy of the Pope, and also that he is Christ's vicar upon earth; and thereby

invests a mortal man with prerogatives and honours, which it is blasphemy to pretend to, "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." She maintains the doctrine of Transubstantiation, teaching the people that the consecrated bread, or host, when it is offered up to God by the priest, is a true propitiatory sacrifice for their sins, and that it is the proper object of their adoration; thus withdrawing their minds from the simple contemplation of the one and only sacrifice for sins, which Christ made of Himself upon the cross, to depend upon a vain pretence of its being as truly and effectually made for them, as often as the Priest consecrates and offers a piece of bread; thus too procuring for the priesthood a superstitious reverence and fear, by which they are able to maintain an unbounded dominion over the minds of the people, whom they also lead into a direct act of idolatry, by requiring that adoration should be paid to this object. She teaches them also to invoke saints and angels, to procure their intercession with God and Christ on their behalf; thereby investing God's creatures with attributes that belong to Him alone, inasmuch as the invocation of them implies, that they are not limited to place, and that they are able to attend to the prayers of as many as call upon them at one and the same time, which is giving the glory of God

to His creatures—a great sin, and is also a dishonouring of Christ, who is the One Mediator between God and man, being alone able, through the union of the divine and human natures in His person, to fulfil that office. Lastly, she demands of the people an implicit faith in all her instructions, as their reasonable and proper duty; giving them no encouragement to search whether what she delivers to them be according to the mind and will of God, but prohibiting the free use of the Holy Scriptures, and generally any use of them at all. Thus she lays a snare for the consciences of the people, who are beguiled to think that it is no concern of theirs to inquire whether the doctrines which are taught them be really true; but they receive and practise them without fear, to the great dishonour of God, and injury of men, and make themselves easy under the vain idea of immunity from guilt, because they are only following the instructions of their priests. But our Lord hath told us, that they who are led blind as well as those who blindly lead, will fall into the same pit.

I feel it to be quite possible, that these statements respecting the nature and tendency of certain doctrines and practices maintained by the Roman Catholic Church, may fail to strike the minds of some persons with that strong feeling of their enormity, which I could wish should dwell

in the bosom of every Protestant; nay, I fear there may be some,—and I cannot reflect upon the state of their minds but with a mixture of shame and amazement,—to whom they may even appear to be deserving of no very grave consideration. Such persons would think that, if I had adduced some of the dogmas out of Dens's Theology, the Irish Roman Catholic priest's manual of instruction, and had shown the anti-social nature of Romanism in its aspect on Protestantism, I should have made out a stronger case in proof of what I desired to establish. But I would beg to observe that, shocking as these dogmas are, they are not so wicked as some of those which I have specified, nor so deserving of our severest reprobation, if we would take a just view of both. These which I have specified have most of them a direct reference to the Most High, and are contrary to the honour and glory of His name. Those which are adverted to in Dens's *pseudo*-Theology, are adverse to the peace and personal safety of Protestants. But ought we to make greater or even so much account of what is only injurious to ourselves, as of what is injurious to the honour and glory of God? I grant we are naturally inclined to do so; but it is one of the proofs of the great degeneracy of our nature. And let every one so account of it, who is convicted here of having such a state of heart and understanding. I pray God

it may not continue to be so with him, but that an honest shame may rouse him to a better and nobler state of mind and feeling—to an enlightened zeal for the honour and glory of God's name.

In the doctrines and practices above described I see for myself abundant reason, without adducing any more of her abominations, to denounce the Church of Rome as corrupt and anti-Christian. And when I also call to mind what the page of history records concerning her; what a proud ascendancy she once gained for herself over the kings and princes of Christendom, and what massacres she has perpetrated of Christian souls for refusing to submit to the yoke of her spiritual domination,—I then see such illustrations in practice of the principles she maintains, as cannot fail to convince me, when I compare them with what is written in the 17th chapter of the Revelation of St. John, that she is the true subject of that remarkable description, and that she is worthy of being held in our utmost abhorrence. And on such grounds as these it is, that I think every Protestant is called upon to profess his belief, that the Church of Rome dishonours God whom she professes to worship, and that the tendency of much of the religion she inculcates is to lead men's souls to perdition; and that, consequently, it *cannot* be lawful for him, in the

sight of God, to consent to her being made the established Church of Ireland, or to any thing being done which will tend to diminish the influence of the Protestant Church in that country, and render the Church of Rome's dominion over it more secure and lasting. My second conclusion therefore is, that as the Protestant members of the Legislature *ought* to think it unlawful for them to sanction the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland, there can be no reason in the argument, as it is addressed to them, that because the great majority of the people of that country are Roman Catholics, justice requires that they should consent to make the Roman Catholic Church the Established Church of Ireland.

But here I am aware that a Roman Catholic, or possibly even some Protestant, might retort, that this principle for which I have now been contending, viz. that Protestants are forbidden by their duty to God to consent to the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church, or to any thing which may be said to countenance her, is out of the question now; that it has been practically abandoned by the grant which the Legislature has made to Maynooth College, and by the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in some of the foreign dependencies of this kingdom.

I reply that, with respect to the grant made to Maynooth College, that can hardly be said to have been an abandonment of this—the old and true Protestant principle; because it is correct, I believe, that the College was assisted at first, not with the direct view of supplying Ireland with Roman Catholic priests, as a thing which the Government and Parliament thought good and desirable in itself to be done, but as a measure of policy, to prevent the education of the same persons in foreign seminaries, or the introduction of priests, that were foreigners, in to Ireland. And as it was done with this view, I contend that the act can, therefore, with no more justice be alleged as an abandonment of the Protestant principle, than the payment of the Roman Catholic priests by the State would be now, if such a measure were thought expedient, or than the concession of the Roman Catholic Claims a few years ago was. If the grant is not now necessary to serve the end formerly proposed, the continuance of it, under the present circumstances of the country, may be consented to, I conceive, by the Protestant members of the Legislature, without any fair occasion being given to Roman Catholics to instance it as an abandonment of their Protestant principle, and to urge it as a precedent for their consenting to think it lawful to sanction the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in

Ireland. Such an occasion, however, would be fairly given, if they had no other reason for consenting to continue it than that assigned the other day by Lord Morpeth, when the vote for the entire grant was opposed by some member of Parliament, viz. that the number of the Roman Catholics in Ireland was six millions, which seemed to imply, that his Lordship thought it was right in itself, on the above account, that the Protestant members of Parliament should do something for the express purpose of supplying Ireland with Roman Catholic Priests, which was just acting on the principle that to establish their religion would not be an unlawful act for Protestants to do. With respect to the other allegation, that the Roman Catholic religion has been established in some of the foreign dependencies of this country, *ex. gr.* Lower Canada; if it be true that it is the established religion of that colony, according to the definition before given of what the proper notion is of establishing a religion, and if it be the act of the British Legislature, I feel compelled to say that it is indefensible; believing, as I do, that the Protestant principle is true, and that it is the duty of Protestants to resist the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland. It must, in such a case, be admitted to be an abandonment of the Protestant principle. But, because this inconsistency and

error has been committed abroad, it would be morally and politically wrong for any one, instead of making the above admission, to attempt a justification of the act by drawing any distinction between establishing that religion abroad and at home. The Protestant principle is, that it is simply evil, and therefore absolutely unlawful, to establish the Roman Catholic religion, being what it is; and what would be simply evil, if done with reference to Ireland, must be the same, if done with reference to Lower Canada, and any other of the British colonies. And if, through inadvertency, and a culpable forgetfulness of its duty, the Legislature, in times past, has made any unlawful enactment of this kind, its duty plainly is to admit its error, now that circumstances have forced it upon its attention; and to determine to undo it as soon as it shall be in its power to do so, which it plainly is not at present, but may be, and I trust will be, when another Parliament is assembled. And to do this is more especially requisite, when this inconsistency and error is made the ground of a charge against Protestants of having abandoned their principle, and is also pleaded in bar of its being allowed to sway their judgment in future acts of legislation. If this principle be abandoned, truth is abandoned, and the mainstay, which must support the Protestant Church

and the Protestant Throne of this Realm, is gone. Let Protestants, therefore, look well to it.

But some may, perhaps, be inclined to say, granted that it is an unlawful thing for Protestants to consent to establish the Roman Catholic religion, it is not unlawful for them to consent to abolish the Protestant establishment in Ireland, and is it not better that there should be none, seeing that its existence is found to be the cause of so much evil in that country? The proper answer to be returned to such an observation appears to me to be this: that the Protestant establishment in Ireland is in no other way the cause of the hostility manifested to it by the Roman Catholics, and of the evils which that hostility brings upon the Protestant Clergy and the Protestants in general of that country, than the preaching of the Christian faith, by our Lord and his Apostles, was the cause of the persecutions directed against them and their peaceable disciples by the wicked Jews and Pagans: that to allege as a cause the existence of certain incongruities in this establishment, which no one would pretend to deny are serious blemishes in it, is a mere pretext; that there is every reason to expect that, if the Protestant establishment were made more efficient for its purpose than it is, by introducing the amendments which are

required, (of which something will be said presently,) the hostility shown to it would be greater still, till it was vanquished, as in a recent remarkable instance in the island of Achill, by the conversion of the adversaries: that the true and proper cause, therefore, of the evil complained of, connected with the existence of the Protestant establishment in Ireland, is the unrestrained envy and malice of those who have stirred up the people to pursue their present course of persecution of the Protestant Church: that it is the ordinance of God that kings and rulers should not hold the sword in vain, but be "His revengers to execute wrath upon them that do evil:" that the due execution of justice upon the lawless is as great a virtue as the exercise of the spirit of forbearance towards the unoffending: that there is no cause in which rulers can employ the power which God has put into their hands, with more honour to themselves and more acceptance with Him, than in defending those, who are the messengers and heralds of His truth, from the attempts of ungodly men to oppress them: that those who say this is forcing a religion upon a people, and propagating it by the sword, do not say the truth: that those who say it is contrary to Christian charity, know not what they say, and have forgotten that it is the command of Christ, who is the Prince of Peace, that the truth of his

religion should be propagated in the world by his ministers, in the face of whatever hostility may be offered to it—not indeed in the way in which the Canons of the Church of Rome teach her sons that it is right to propagate their corruption of Christianity,—but by the spiritual weapons of argument and persuasion in the simple preaching of His Word to unconstrained hearers, and by the innocent compulsion of the force of truth in the inward parts. And such being the weapons of this warfare, which the Protestant Church, established in Ireland, has been set to employ, for leading captive the captivity of the Irish people, and delivering them from the dominion of the corrupt and anti-Christian Church of Rome, whoever should say, that this Protestant State ought to abandon the attempt she has been making, because it has not as yet been crowned with the desired success, and because it provokes the hostility of those with whom it does not prove successful, would be guilty of persuading her to forego her highest duty to God and Christ, and to the people committed to her charge, and would thrust her into the peril of being forsaken by Him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and who is able to pluck up a Commonwealth and scatter all her blessings to the winds, when she has forsaken the cause of advancing the knowledge of His truth, and extending His spiritual

kingdom among those who are subject to her rule.

It is said by some, that the Protestant Establishment does not meet the wants of the Irish people. It is scarcely possible to conceive a more absurd assertion as made, or admitted by those who are Protestants. Do we believe that the Church of Rome has corrupted Christianity? Do we believe that her errors dishonour God and expose to damnation the souls which live in them? I have before shown, from the instance of St. Paul the Apostle, that they who commit errors in religion through honest mispersuasion, and for want of making due inquiry, are not free from guilt in the sight of God. How much less then can those persons be, before whose eyes the light of truth has been placed? And is not this the case, as we believe, with tens of thousands, nay, I may say, of millions of our Roman Catholic Brethren in Ireland. Must they not then be in our account men, who have not received the love of the truth, that they might be saved? How then can we help looking upon them as persons who are in peril of damnation, unless we give up the certainty of our own persuasion of what is truth? And is this reasonable? Is it our duty? Is it treating the Almighty with reverence to think that, although he has given us a revelation of His will to guide us into the knowledge and

belief of the truth, that we may be saved thereby, it becometh us to profess that we cannot have a certain persuasion of knowing the truth, because unity of faith does not exist among men, and that all professions ought to be regarded as equally true, which men say they have derived from His revelation? Such is the impiety and folly of this *liberal* principle? What then! it would be asked by those who have adopted it, do you mean that every one is to think himself infallible, or, instead of allowing infallibility to the Church of Rome, do you claim it for the Protestant Church? My answer is, that I neither think myself infallible, nor claim infallibility for the Protestant Church, nor believe that there is any infallible authority constituted upon earth to which men are to refer the settlement of all controversies that may arise respecting the truth which this revelation contains; but that it is the will of God that every man, after having made honest inquiry according to the means and opportunities that are afforded him, and in the recollection that he is responsible to Him, the searcher of hearts, for the way in which he uses these means and discharges this duty, and after having formed his best judgment, should adopt that as certain truth for himself to profess, and should be guided by it as though he were infallibly certain that it is true, till he shall see reason to think that

his judgment was not correctly formed, and discovers what he believes to be a more correct view of truth. And, that no one may take occasion, from what I have now advanced on this point, to say that I inculcate the duty of every man's depending simply on his own ability and his own judgment, I beg to observe, that I reckon among the means of inquiry which God would have us to use in this case, the voice of their judgment to whom He would appear to have given a larger measure of the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, to which too much attention and deference can scarcely be paid short of a blind obedience to it; for every one is still responsible to God for the judgment he at length adopts, and none, either individually, or collectively, are to be thought infallible. "Call no man Master upon earth," was our Lord's direction to his disciples. And again he said, "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Wherein He plainly forbad an implicit reliance upon any but the Word of God itself, and as plainly declared that that word is calculated to lead every one to the knowledge of the truth, and that, if any wilfully err, they will certainly be convicted of having done so by that very Word itself, when they come to stand before Him, who is a dis-

cerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and to give an account of themselves to God. According to the principle, then, which I have just stated, it is every man's duty to speak and act as though he were infallibly certain that what he has received for truth is true, so long as it continues to be the single and firm persuasion of his mind, that it is agreeable with the Word of God, according to his best understanding of it. And this I conceive to be a right deduction from the Apostolic injunction, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." I would wish, however, that it should be carefully noted, that I have said only "*as though* he were infallibly certain;" for this is necessary, in order that he may have a present rule to follow; whilst it still leaves it open for him to admit the possibility of his being in error, which is right, in order that he may not seem to assume what is the prerogative of God alone. But he must never suffer the admission of this possibility in the abstract, to make him hold his present rule of action less firmly than if he were infallibly certain of the truth of his present judgment. He must still speak and act with reference to others in regard of all things of which he is fully persuaded in his own mind, and so far also as he believes it to be his duty to do so, as though he were infallibly certain that his judgment is just. Am I, therefore, fully per-

suaded that the Priesthood of the Church of Rome "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," and that, according to our Lord's words, "their worship of God is therefore in vain?" I must, then, speak and act with reference to them, and those whom they lead, as though I were infallibly certain that this is true. I must denounce their religion as corrupt and anti-Christian. I must testify to those who have been brought up in it that this is the case, and that they are, consequently, in peril of damnation. And I must use my best endeavours to persuade them of the same. To return, then, to the observation which has led to this discussion and to this conclusion. What ought we to think, when we hear it said, that the Protestant Establishment does not meet the wants of the Irish people? Could the Protestant State of this Kingdom, I ask, listen to such an observation without belying her own persuasion? Could she act according to it without abandoning her most sacred duty? The wants of the Irish people, in respect of this matter, are not to be judged of by their wishes, but by the conscientious belief of every individual member of the Legislature, as to the nature and effects of the Roman Catholic religion on the one hand, and of the Protestant on the other. And if every Protestant legislator is fully persuaded that the religion of the Church of Rome is corrupt and

pernicious in its tendency, and that the Protestant is pure and saving in its tendency, then must each judge that, notwithstanding the hostility of the Roman Catholics to it, the Protestant Establishment does meet the wants of the Irish people, and that it ought to be modified so as to meet those wants in the most effectual manner. Did the Gospel not meet the wants of the Jews, because they rejected it, and persecuted those who brought it to them, and nailed to the cross the Holy One, who redeemed them with His blood? Did our Lord perform a useless service, "because all the day long he stretched out his hands to this disobedient and gainsaying people?" Do the thousands of the Irish people, who have been recovered from the tyranny, and darkness, and damnation of the Church of Rome, think the Protestant Establishment, which, under God, was the means of effecting their deliverance, did not meet their wants? Will the thousands, who, I trust in God, are yet to be recovered from the same, in the day of some near approaching and gracious visitation, think, when that day shall have arrived to gladden their hearts, that their wants were not consulted, when the Protestant State of this Kingdom determined to maintain this Establishment despite their tumult and rage against it? Let us know, then, how we ought to treat this senseless observation.

If our Roman Catholic brethren think they have no spiritual wants to be supplied by the Protestant Church established among them, the good intention of the State to serve them ought, at least, by the law of Christianity, to be as peaceably declined as it is peaceably executed; and would be so, if their corruption of religion did not permit them to trample both on human and divine law, when the pretence is to serve the true Church of Rome. The State does not attempt, she does not manifest any desire, to constrain them by molestation of any sort to accept the religion she proposes to them, or even to hear it against their will. Her tender mercies, therefore, are not, like the Church of Rome's, cruel. And she only proposes it to them, because she verily believes it to be both for their good and her's that they should accept it, and nothing more than the discharge of her most bounden duty to set it before them, and to place it continually within their reach, in the hope that they may at length embrace it, though for the present they continue to refuse. There is, therefore, utterly a fault among them if they take this as a wrong. She has discarded their religion because she became convinced of its contrariety to the truth; and they dare not openly avow, though they seem to act upon that principle, that she had not a right to do so, any more than we Protestants can say that she would not have a

right to discard ours, if ever she became persuaded in like manner concerning it. In such a case, however, I trust that our religion would not have the rebelliousness of its professors against the power which had so ordained, to attest its anti-Christianity; but, on the contrary, our patient submission to the appointment of Divine Providence to attest its truth. "This is thankworthy," says the Apostle on which the Church of Rome boasts that she is built, "if a man for conscience sake towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." And again, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the King as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." Do the Roman Catholics think that the State has no just power over them in respect of what they do in obedience to the principles of the Church of Rome? that resistance to her ordinances in civil and temporal things is not rebellion, because they have invested the successor to St. Peter's chair with the authority of a triple crown, and placed it above the authority of the temporal power of every Christian State? Is this the true

solution of the shamelessness with which they are acting in defiance of the laws of this realm, claiming property as belonging to them of right, which the State has ordained that they should forfeit, and maintaining a warfare with the State for the recovery of it from those to whom she has transferred it? Such principles are in direct contradiction to the injunctions of this Apostle, who was guilty of no such arrogancy as to set up for himself, or to allow others to set up for him, such a monstrous claim as this: for he did not teach the faithful to think that the liberty they are to maintain as his disciples, and sons of the Church of Christ, is exemption from obedience to the civil laws of the temporal power under which they live; but, on the contrary, that to adopt such a principle, and to act upon it, would be "to put on a cloak of maliciousness." How great then must be the iniquity of those, if such there be, calling themselves Christians, who are guilty of putting on the double cloak of disavowing such a principle whilst they act upon it! But the principle is disavowed and become obsolete, notwithstanding the infallibility of the Church of Rome is still maintained! Such then being the case, we must look at the conduct of the Irish Roman Catholics as the pure result of a strong sense of injury done to them, if we take the explanation which is given of it by themselves and their advo-

cates. And on what ground is the injury pretended to be felt? Have they ventured to say, that when the State caused their forefathers to suffer the forfeiture of the Ecclesiastical property, which they are now endeavouring to grasp, she rewarded them evil for good, and found no fault in them at all that could justify such a procedure? No: this is not said. And if it were said, and truly said too, it would be no justification of their present conduct. For let us hear St. Peter once more—"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. . . . . For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." But the ground of the injustice they complain of is alleged to be, that they constitute the majority of the Irish people, and therefore have a right to the use of this property for the purposes of their religion, or at least to demand that it shall not be applied to the support of the Protestant Establishment. I have shown the futility of such an allegation when made to our Protestant State. But if it were not as futile as it is, what a shameless renunciation of the fear of God must have pervaded the priesthood of this Church, if, whilst they have seen such outrages committed, on such a ground as this, by those

who are subject to their spiritual direction, they have not attempted to restrain them! For, let it be remembered, I am now arguing on the supposition of their being sincere in the denial of the principle of an *imperium in imperio*, of the supremacy of the See of Rome controlling the acts of the British Parliament. Really, for their sake, I could almost wish that they retained this obnoxious principle, as a conscientious error, and could have explained their connivance at the present lawlessness of their people by reference to it. For, wicked as their conduct would then appear, it would, in my opinion, be far less so than it is now; seeing that they are utterly destitute of any principle of justification for such connivance but what either they are ashamed to avow because they are not prepared to defend it, or would prove them to be men who disregard the clearest precepts of the Christian faith. For will any pretend that a sense of imagined injury, such as in this case has been alleged as the reason for the system of robbery and outrage that has been pursued of late years in Ireland, would not be utterly repudiated as a justification of it, if any appeal were made to the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles? It is awful to think of the responsibility which such men have incurred by such connivance; and their conduct holds out a warning to the State to know what manner of men they are. After these

observations I may conclude by saying how grossly unprincipled, how shamefully wicked it is, for any one to say, as we sometimes hear it said, that the Protestant Clergy are the destroyers of the peace of Ireland, because they are engaged in propagating a religion which is rejected by those to whom they are appointed to offer it. I have shown that in their way of doing this they follow the way of peace; whoever therefore will lightly throw the blame of Ireland's evils upon them, would do well to reflect that, "for every idle word which men speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment."

The case is clear, Brethren,—the speeches and actions of the Roman Catholics of Ireland have abundantly evinced, that as a body they are bent upon the subversion of the Protestant United Church of England and Ireland as the Established Church of that country; and although, when directly charged with entertaining that design, they deny it, as it is only to be expected they would do, I trust there are few among us Protestants, who will suffer ourselves to be duped by the gross dissimulation of the pretences they make. They are equally an insult to our understandings and a jest upon our reasonable apprehensions. None but those, who care not what religion is established, so that an end may be put to the scenes of lawless outrage which have been

so frequent in Ireland, (and which they would probably find themselves mistaken in thinking would surely disappear, if the State would consent to the abolition of the Protestant Church Establishment, and erect the Roman Catholic Church as the Established Church of Ireland in its place,) can possibly believe them; and such men are guilty of a crime in hiding their eyes from the demonstrative proofs, which have been so repeatedly afforded, of the hypocrisy with which they are made. There is but little reason to hope, if the Roman Catholics should succeed in this enterprise—which I trust God will avert—that the evils of Ireland will disappear. They who have not been restrained by any regard to human law, or any fear of God, from using violence to compass this end, will not be unlikely to use the same means for securing themselves in the position they have gained; and therefore to continue the persecution of Protestants simply with a view to get rid of their religion. For they would feel that if Protestantism should extend itself, and become the religion of the majority in Ireland, as it has become in England and Scotland, the State might then call upon them to remember their own principle, and quietly give up to the Protestant Church again what they prevailed on her to transfer from that to their own. Nor is it only to be apprehended that the evils of Ireland would

not be put an end to by consenting to this change. It is not impossible that success might embolden the Roman Catholics to try the effect of some system of intimidation in England or Scotland, if ever they should grow into a condition of sufficient numerical strength to make it a matter of exceeding difficulty with the government to repress them. And I hardly need observe how strong is the temptation, when civil commotion has been once begun by the adherents of any religion with the design of gaining proselytes by intimidation, for those who have not attained to a spirit of constancy through a just estimation of the necessity of holding the truth, to think that the violent will be sure to succeed, and that it is therefore safer and wiser to join them at once, with the credit of appearing to do so from an unconstrained choice, rather than in the end be forced to adopt their religion manifestly by the constraint of fear. The existence of such a temptation would be a sore evil to this our country, and might prove effectual in making thousands and tens of thousands renounce the Protestant faith, who otherwise would have no inclination to do so; but whose minds are so imperfectly acquainted with the nature of the Roman Catholic religion and carry within them so little enlightened affection to the Protestant Church which has borne them, and would have nourished them with the sincere milk of

God's Word to greater maturity of understanding and greater strength of faith, if only they would have obeyed her call to come and receive it, that they are destitute of that state of mind which is necessary to enable them to resist such a temptation. You may see then, Brethren, where the danger lies; and I would call upon each of you to reflect and say how you would like to find yourselves exposed to this temptation. I anticipate your answer; and would observe upon it, how lamentable it is then, that there should be any Protestants found, whether in the Legislature or not, who, by the sentiments they express, or the conduct they pursue, with reference to the question which has been discussed in this letter, should aid the Roman Catholics of this kingdom in the accomplishment of their designs, and should not rather resolve to unite with the rest of their Brethren in resisting them at once, and repressing their present attempt to subvert the establishment of the Protestant United Church of England and Ireland, in Ireland.

If what has been already offered to your consideration is not of sufficient force, to convince you how disastrous to our country in general, and ourselves individually, the success of the Roman Catholics in this enterprise would be; and how contrary also it is to our duty to God and our fellow-men, that we should do any thing that

has a tendency to help it on; I feel that nothing else which I could say would prove so. But I am sanguine in my belief, that the effect will be generally, and as far as this letter is read, according to my desire. It will then remain with you, Brethren, to determine, under God, whether or no they shall succeed in this enterprise. If you will send as your representatives to Parliament none but those, who see that it is expedient, and right, to resist the principle of the measure which Lord Morpeth has now introduced; men, who cordially loathe the shallow philosophy and hollow professions of the party, or rather of the mixed parties, which are now pushing it forward; men, who are not indifferent to the maintenance of truth, and believe that the Protestant United Church of England and Ireland is the principal guardian of it for this realm; men, who under a sense of their responsibility to the Most High, and in the consciousness of acting rightly in His sight, are not to be scared from the discharge of their duty, by listening to the intimidating representations of others as to the impossibility of repressing this wicked and numerous conspiracy, which is labouring with all its art and might for the subversion of the Protestant Established Church, the bulwark of your civil and religious liberty—then may we expect, with the favour of Heaven, to see them driven backward and put to shame, and the

country once more restored to tranquillity and peace, with her institutions safe. I conjure you, then, by all that you hold most dear for yourselves and your children, liberty of conscience, purity of religion and worship, the favour of God, and the hope of heaven, to send such men, and such only, as your representatives to the great Council of the Nation.

Before I conclude, there is one point more to which it seems necessary for me to advert, in order to complete the design which I have had in addressing this letter to you. Some there may be, whose good-will and affection towards the Protestant Church is not to be suspected, who might say, after reading this letter, that although the argument I have pursued is conclusive against the lawfulness of Protestant members of Parliament consenting to abandon the establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland, and to establish the Roman Catholic in its place; it does not appear to furnish any reason, why they should not consent to the principle of Lord Morpeth's measure,—the principle of appropriating a part of the Ecclesiastical property of Ireland, which is not wanted for the maintenance of the Protestant religion, to the purpose of educating the Roman Catholic children according to the system of National Education lately adopted. To such persons I would beg to say that—setting aside the

fact, which has been, I conceive, incontestably proved by Sir Robert Peel, that there would not be more property of this kind remaining in Ireland than would be required, on a very moderate computation, for the maintenance of the Clergy of the Protestant Church who would still remain after the operation of Lord Morpeth's Bill; setting aside also the consideration of what must in all likelihood be the consequence of once admitting such an alienation of this property for the alleged purpose of spiritually benefiting the Roman Catholic population of Ireland through a different medium than the Ministry of the Protestant Established Church, (considerations of sufficient force in themselves, in my opinion, to justify the refusal of any such appropriation,) I will suppose that a real surplus does exist, and I will proceed to show that its application in the way proposed is not what Protestants ought to sanction.

It must be admitted, I think, that the same high considerations which make it the duty of the Legislature[1] to provide for the instruction of the

[1] If any person needs to have his mind more certainly informed on this point, I would beg to direct his attention to the admirable dissertation on the subject, by Dr. Dealtry, entitled, "Religious Establishments tried by the Word of God," which has been published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; and may be had on application at any of its depositories, or of Messrs. Rivington.

people in what she believes to be true religion, require that she should do this in a way that is calculated to effect the end proposed. Any system of religious instruction, therefore, which, though true as far as it went, would yet be ineffectual and void in respect of this end, by reason of its failing to supply what was essentially necessary to compass it, could not be said to be a right discharge of its duty. Now, it is admitted, that it is the duty of this Protestant State to propagate the Protestant religion in Ireland, believing that to be true religion. But to what purpose is it, towards this end, to institute schools for the religious education of Roman Catholic children, in which they are not to hear the false principles of the Church of Rome exposed, and the true principles of the Protestant faith explained? No benefit, therefore, in respect of showing them the difference in doctrine between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Church is to be expected; and consequently none, in respect of their discovering any reason of this kind, which may afterwards operate with them to bring them over to the Protestant Church. And we may be quite sure that if there was any chance of this effect being produced, the Roman Catholic Clergy would not admit of the schools. Then again it is to be considered that even the benefits to be expected from preceptive instruction will fail of

being realized, unless right principles are implanted in the mind to direct the application of the precepts which are learned. Who can suppose that Roman Catholics do not know equally as well as Protestants that to lie, to rob, to kill, to perjure one's self, to resist the laws, are, in the abstract, sins against God, and that those who do them expose themselves to damnation? But what avails the communication of this knowledge in these schools, if the children are also taught by their parents, or their priests, that according to the decrees of the only true Catholic, Apostolic, and infallible Church of Rome, no sin is committed when these things are done towards Protestants, and to serve the interests of the Church? And is not this the doctrine to be found in Dens' *pseudo*-Theology, ordered to be printed by the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland for the study of the parish Priests? I contend, then, that the application of this alleged surplus, in the way proposed, must be wholly frustrate, as a means of spiritually benefiting the Roman Catholic population of Ireland. It is a compromise with the Roman Catholic Church, and an abandonment of the State's highest duty. The proper means, in my humble opinion, of providing for the extension of the Protestant religion in Ireland, is for the Bishops of the Protestant Church, in that country, to select able and devoted men from

amongst their clergy, who are ready to go, in suitable companies, into those parts of the country and parishes where Protestantism does not exist, and, by their preaching, to labour to expose to as many as are willing to hear them the false principles of the Church of Rome, and to open the principles of the Protestant faith. And then, according as it pleases God to prosper the labours of these men, to form churches of Protestants whenever a competent number of converts, say fifty, in any given space, shall have been made, to fix resident ministers among them, and to institute schools for the Protestant education of their children. In this way there would be some hope of recovering the people from Romanism, and making them true Christians; and Lord Morpeth's surplus would be employed to the best purpose, in supporting these men and these schools. And I doubt not there would soon be occasion for its full amount. What has recently been done, through the blessing of God, in the island of Achill, by the Rev. Mr. Nangle, a clergyman of the Established Church, affords a good presage, that success might confidently be expected in other places. I conclude, then, for these reasons, that no Protestant member of the Legislature ought to consent to the appropriation of the ecclesiastical property of Ireland which is proposed to be made by Lord Morpeth's Irish

Church Bill; because, in the first place, being ineffectual for securing the end which the State ought to keep in view, it is a compromise of her duty to God, merely to gratify the Roman Catholics; and secondly, there are other ways in which the alleged surplus might be very profitably employed to aid the propagation of true religion. But is the State, it will be replied, to do nothing for the Roman Catholics? Such a question is wholly out of place, and conveys a false insinuation against the Protestant State. Whilst the State supports the establishment of a pure Church, according to her belief, and endeavours to render it as efficient as she can for extending the knowledge of what she believes to be true religion, by adapting its modification to the circumstances of the country, she is doing all that she can do for the Roman Catholics. If they disregard the benefit which she has provided for them, and will cleave to that Church, which they know the State considers to be corrupt, all that they can then reasonably expect her to do is, "to let them alone;" and the benefit of toleration has been ordinarily considered as one, which called for gratitude and respect; but now it would appear to be nothing at all. This too, according to our Lord's precept to his disciples, would seem to be the proper course for her to take. But she would discharge no duty, if, instead of following

this course, she were to apply her means in providing a system of instruction, which she has reason to know can do no effectual good, by reason of its great defects.

I conjure you then, once more, by all that you hold most dear for yourselves and your children, send those men, and those only, as your representatives to the great Council of the Nation, who are prepared to resist the appropriation of Ecclesiastical property to any other purpose than that of making the Protestant Church Establishment of Ireland more efficient for its excellent purpose.

I remain, Brethren,

With all due respect,

Your humble and faithful Servant,

PETER BLACKBURN.

CASTLE COOMBE,
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